

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of claims:**

1-9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) An optical coupler for transmitting an optical signal between a first device and at least a plurality of second devices, the optical coupler comprising:

~~ed of at least a plurality of optical fibers each having first and second ends, a portion of each of the fibers being stripped,~~ the first device disposed in optical communication with ~~thea~~ second end of each one of the at least the plurality of optical fibers, one second device disposed in optical communication with the first end of at least one of the ~~at least the plurality of~~ optical fibers, and another second device disposed in optical communication with the first end of at least another one of the ~~at least the plurality of~~ optical fibers and with the second ends of the at least the plurality of optical fibers having each one of its second ends being juxtaposed in placed head to head with the first device, a sleeve being provided which surrounds the second ends of the optical fibers and from which the stripped portion of each of the optical fibers protrudes, and further comprising

a first, heat shrinkable sheath that surrounds a stripped portion of each of the optical fibers which extends from the sleeve to a portion of each of the optical fibers that is not stripped.

11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) The optical coupler of claim ~~104~~ wherein each one of the second ends are stripped, disposed side-by-side, and stuck in the sleeve~~ferrule~~.

13. (canceled)

14. (currently amended) The optical coupler of claim ~~103~~ further comprising a second sheath~~shaft~~ surrounding at least a portion of the first sheath~~shaft~~, at last a portion the sleeve~~ferrule~~, and at least the unstripped portion of each optical fiber.

15. (currently amended) The optical coupler of claim 14 wherein the second sheath~~shaft~~ is bonded to~~stuck on~~ the first sheath~~shaft~~.

16. (previously presented) The optical coupler of claim 14 wherein the second sheath~~shaft~~ forms a Y-shaped conduit around each one of the optical fibers.

17. (canceled)

18. (currently amended) The optical coupler of claim ~~17~~ 10 wherein the first device is a transmitter and each second device is a receiver.

19. (currently amended) An optical coupler for conveying an optical signal comprising:

- (a) a transmitter;
- (b) a pair of receivers;

(c) a pair of optical links with each optical link having one end disposed in communication with the transmitter, the other end of one optical link disposed in communication with one receiver, and the other end of the other optical link disposed in communication with the other receiver, wherein a stripped end-portion of the ~~one-other~~ end of the one optical link and a stripped end-portion of the ~~one-other~~ end of the other optical link are disposed adjacent each other;

(d) a ~~sleeve~~ferrule disposed adjacent the transmitter in which ~~each-one-of-the~~ stripped ends of ~~each-one-of-the~~ optical links are disposed;

(e) a first protective ~~sheath~~shaft surrounding each ~~one-of-the~~ optical links and disposed between the transmitter and the receivers; and

(f) a second protective ~~sheath~~shaft surrounding the first ~~sheath~~ shaft and forming a generally Y-shaped conduit; and

~~(g) at least one sheath disposed between the first and second protective shafts and which extends from one end of the transmitter to one end of each receiver.~~

20. (currently amended) An optical coupler comprising:

(a) a transmitter;

(b) a pair of receivers;

(c) a pair of optical fibers that each have an outer covering with each optical fiber having one end stripped of the outer covering and connected to the transmitter with the stripped ~~one-ends~~ of ~~the one~~ optical fibers disposed side-by-side with one another ~~with the stripped one end of the other optical fiber~~, the other end of one of the optical fibers being stripped and connected to one receiver, and the other end of the other of the optical fibers being stripped and connected to the other receiver; and

(d) a ~~sheath~~shaft that forms a generally Y-shaped conduit and that extends about each ~~one-of-the~~ optical fibers with one end of the ~~shaft~~sheath overlying at least a

portion of the transmitter and the other end of the ~~sheath~~shaft overlying at least a portion of each ~~one~~ of the receivers.

21. (currently amended) An optical coupler comprising:
- (a) a transmitter;
  - (b) a pair of receivers;
  - (c) a pair of optical fibers that each extend from the transmitter to one of the receivers with one of the optical fibers extending from the transmitter to one of the receivers and the other one of the optical fibers extending from the transmitter to the other one of the receivers;
  - (d) ~~an outer sheath~~shaft that forms a generally Y-shaped conduit and ~~that~~ extends about each one of the optical fibers with one end of the ~~shaft~~outer sheath overlying at least a portion of the transmitter and the other end of the ~~outer sheath~~shaft overlying at least a portion of each one of the receivers;
  - (e) ~~an inner-first~~ sheath that underlies the ~~outer sheath~~shaft, that overlies the optical fibers, and that extends from an end of the transmitter toward each one of the receivers; and
  - (f) a ~~sleeve~~second sheath that underlies the ~~outer sheath~~shaft, that overlies an end of each of the optical fibers, and that extends from the transmitter toward an end of both receivers ~~toward the transmitter with one of the sheaths overlapping the other one of the sheaths.~~

22. (currently amended) An optical coupler comprising:
- (a) a transmitter;
  - (b) a pair of receivers;

(c) a pair of optical fibers that each extend from the transmitter to one of the receivers with one of the optical fibers extending from the transmitter to one of the receivers and the other one of the optical fibers extending from the transmitter to the other one of the receivers;

(d) a sleeve ~~first shaft~~ that surrounds an end of each ~~one~~ of the optical fibers and that is disposed between the transmitter and the receivers;

(e) a first sheath that overlies the sleeve ~~first shaft~~ and that extends from an end of the transmitter toward each ~~one~~ of the receivers; and

(f) a second sheath that overlies the first sheath ~~shaft~~ and that extends from an end of both receivers toward the transmitter ~~with one of the sheaths overlapping the other one of the sheaths; and~~

~~(g) — a second shaft that overlies the sheaths and~~ to forms a generally Y-shaped conduit that extends from the transmitter to the receivers and thus has one end overlying at least a portion of the transmitter and ~~has another end overlying at least a portion of~~ each ~~one~~ of the receivers.

23. (new) The optical coupler of claim 10, wherein  
the sleeve and optical fibers have wicks, and  
the sleeve wicks and optical fiber wicks are intermingled around the first sheath.

24. (new) The optical coupler of claim 19, wherein the first sheath is a heat shrinkable sheath and overlies a stripped portion of each of the optical links that extends from the sleeve to a portion of the optical link that is not stripped.

25. (new) The optical coupler of claim 20, wherein the sheath is an outer sheath, and further comprising

a sleeve that surrounds an end of each of the optical fibers and that is disposed between the transmitter and the receivers; and

an inner sheath that is overlaid by the outer sleeve and that extends from an end of the transmitter toward each one of the receivers, wherein the inner sheath is a heat shrinkable sheath and overlies a stripped portion of each of the optical fibers that extends from the sleeve to a portion of the optical fiber that is not stripped.

26. (new) The optical coupler of claim 21, wherein the inner sheath is a heat shrinkable sheath and overlies a stripped portion of each of the optical fibers that extends from the sleeve to a portion of the optical fiber that is not stripped.

27. (new) The optical coupler of claim 22, wherein the first sheath is a heat shrinkable sheath and overlies a stripped portion of each of the optical fibers that extends from the sleeve to a portion of the optical fiber that is not stripped.